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SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF BURUNDIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND
JUDICIAL TRAINING NEEDS

REF: STATE 5448

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Government of Burundi (GOB) faces significant challenges in reforming its security sector, including a lack for training for mid-level officers within the Burundian National Police (PNB) and a pervasive culture of impunity. The GOB is willing to partner with international actors in reform efforts, but lacks an organizational culture that allows training focused on high-level authorities to permeate throughout the PNB. Therefore, training for mid-level police in every aspect of police procedure is Post's highest priority. International partners, including the Dutch, UN, French and Belgians, are leading comprehensive security and justice reform efforts that allow for complementary training programs. END SUMMARY.

Challenges to Burundi's Non-Military Security Apparatus

¶2. (SBU) Burundi's civilian security sector confronts many challenges, many of which come from within the ranks of the police themselves. When the civil war ended in 2005 many of the demobilized rebel fighters were integrated into the civilian police. As a result the majority of the police force not only have no formal police training or education but, as former rebels, had become accustomed to making their living through extortion and robbery. Post receives regular reports of police involvement in crimes throughout Burundi.

¶3. (SBU) Further, violent crime is pervasive and Burundi's security environment is permissive for many other forms of criminal activity. Of particular concern is the large number of small arms and light weapons, particularly AK-47s and hand grenades, circulating within the population. There are few formal controls on weapons issued to government security forces and officials cannot even estimate the vast number of weapons in the hands of private citizens. As a result, certain provinces experience daily acts of highway robbery, home invasions, auto theft and retaliatory attacks on individuals for reasons ranging from land disputes to political rivalry. Although Burundi is not yet a haven for drug traffickers and/or money launderers, the lack of enforcement of laws and prosecution for crimes, as well as pervasive corruption at all levels, make Burundi a potential future home for such activities.

¶4. (SBU) Further, the courts face a significant backlog of cases and lack adequate infrastructure and resources to address the problem. Years of civil war and minimal judicial capacity mean that the some civil cases date back several decades. The judiciary's inability to deal with the backlog of criminal cases has led to extended pretrial detention times and overcrowded prisons. Further, widespread impunity for individuals with means remains a problem and weakens the

population's faith in an equitable justice system.

Can Burundi Respond to these Challenges?

15. (SBU) The GOB and the upper echelons of the civilian security sector understand the problems they face and are the only members of the sector currently with the capability and training to address Burundi's challenges. Most of the upper management of the police have attended advanced courses and conferences concerning all aspects of enacting laws and law enforcement but they appear unwilling or unable to transfer that knowledge to their subordinates. Consequently, officers in middle management do not understand simple concepts such as evidence collection or interviewing witnesses. Therefore, the majority of crimes, with the exception of high-profile cases, go uninvestigated and trials are rare. Command and control of the street police is even more limited and street cops themselves are not empowered nor trained sufficiently to handle anything but the most obvious crimes.

16. (SBU) The justice system suffers from a lack of adequate resources and organizational ineffectiveness that make it difficult to overcome the many challenges it faces. Reform of the system will take many years and a committed group of partners. The culture of impunity that exists is a political problem that must be addressed at the highest levels of government before it is erased at the local level. Nevertheless, sustained professional training will help speed progress.

Burundi's Training Requirements

17. (SBU) The PBN needs training in all aspects of law enforcement at all but the highest levels. The officers in middle management need training in the law, leadership, public affairs, human rights, investigations, forensics, computers, financial crime, terrorism, traffic law and basic policing. The street police need to be trained in use of force, officer safety, weapons maintenance and handling, law, traffic management, civil rights and how to deal with the public.

18. (SBU) The United Nations and the Belgian Technical Cooperation are leading a comprehensive reform effort of the judicial system. However, further resources to assist the judiciary with training in judicial access, justice for minors, professionalization of judges, capacity-building for local administrations and further assistance to victims of domestic violence are needed.

Burundi's Willingness to be an Effective Partner

19. (SBU) The GOB is an eager, willing and receptive partner in the fight to professionalize its security and justice sectors. Instead of focusing solely on senior security officials however, Post feels there is a significant benefit to training mid-level officers in basic police concepts.

International Partner Efforts

110. (SBU) The most significant partners in security sector capacity-building and reform are the United Nations, the Belgians, the French and the Dutch. The United Nations is training police instructors, providing uniforms, gear, radios and vehicles, as well as assistance in controlling small arms and light weapons. The Belgians have assisted the PNB in creating and implementing a training program designed to train all street police and officers in the basics of human rights and law enforcement. As of early 2009, 16,000 police and 1,000 officers have completed the first week-long module

addressing code of conduct, human rights, civics and mission and organization of the PNB. Six hundred police and 45 officers have also received the second week-long module on use of force.

¶11. (SBU) The French laid the cornerstone February 16 of a police academy which will offer a two-year graduate-level training course to 60 officers per course. The Dutch are tackling command and control by advising the Ministry of Internal Security on the creation of a comprehensive 10-year strategic plan to overhaul and professionalize the PNB. To assist in the execution of the plan, the Dutch have one full-time advisor from the Dutch police force that is embedded with the PNB. Further, the Dutch are financing a police officer census and the creation of a computer database to manage human resources, and will provide and assist in database maintenance. The Dutch are also working to build six regional police training facilities, but land and contract disputes have stalled the project. Most countries with representation in Burundi provide some type of training support to upper level police officials, but the same individuals continue to attend the external training.

¶12. (SBU) The United States is promoting police professionalism through regional training efforts and programs designed to control small arms and light weapons. Two officers have been sent to and completed training at the FBI's National Academy in Quantico. Burundi has just been accepted into the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Gaborone. Four officers have already attended DEA training at ILEA and as many as 14 are scheduled to attend training before the end of the year. The Department of Homeland Security is providing training in border security with regional training to be conducted in Nairobi. The U.S. is also planning to support the fight against uncontrolled small arms and light weapons through construction of police-based armories and by training weapons custodians to properly implement existing weapons control policies.

¶13. (SBU) The United Nations and the Belgian Technical Cooperation are leading a comprehensive reform effort of the judicial system that includes four embedded advisors within the Ministry of Justice. Further assistance includes infrastructure development, professionalization training, promoting wide judicial access for disadvantaged people, providing vehicles and computer equipment, and developing a public relations strategy to help reduce violence against women and children.

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¶14. (SBU) Further correspondence can be directed to Regional Security Officer Chris Bakken at bakkenca@state.gov.

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